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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 5 October 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to refer to the candidature submitted to the Human Rights Council in March 2012 by the Government of Ecuador for the period 2016-2018.

In May 2012, Ecuador submitted its universal periodic review, an exercise that involved the participation of several sectors of Ecuadorian society, the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Worship and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ecuador accepted 96 per cent of the recommendations in the universal periodic review, demonstrating an absolute, sincere and transparent commitment to broaden and deepen its agenda of work in the area of human rights, as one of its main national priorities.

Ecuador has actively participated in forums to promote and respect human rights, promoting the adoption of important human rights tools on the international agenda.

The Government of the Republic of Ecuador, in line with its national and international policy of defending human rights, seeks election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018 in the elections to be held on 28 October of this year. To that end, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251, it presents its voluntary pledges and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 5 October 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Ecuador to the Human Rights Council, 2016-2018: voluntary pledges and commitments

The Republic of Ecuador has submitted its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018, in the elections to be held during the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

I. Ecuador and the promotion and protection of human rights

1. In 2006, Ecuador was elected to serve as one of the 47 founding members of the Human Rights Council, and it was again a member in the period 2010-2012. During those periods, Ecuador supported several draft resolutions concerning the adoption of important human rights tools that were pending on the international agenda, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. It also supported the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and several draft resolutions and decisions related to, inter alia, the right to development, access to water, extreme poverty and migration.

2. Ecuador believes that the Human Rights Council has a significant role to play as an independent and non-selective intergovernmental human rights body and attaches importance to its work related to human rights issues in countries, and will continue to cooperate with all of the Council's universal procedures.

3. Ecuador has contributed to the promotion and protection of human rights through its ongoing support for and active participation in Human Rights Council working groups and special procedures, and in the review of the corresponding mechanisms and issues.

4. Ecuador recognizes the universal periodic review as the only universal mechanism for compliance and assessment of the status of human rights in States.

5. Ecuador is a party to the 10 main human rights treaties adopted by the United Nations and submits periodic reports to the corresponding committees.

6. Ecuador supports the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the regional or national offices, in the investigation, dissemination and response to complaints made to the corresponding mechanisms and special procedures of alleged human rights violations that occur in the country concerned.

7. In accordance with the Constitution and national policy, the Government of Ecuador maintains an open invitation and ongoing collaboration with the United Nations human rights mechanisms and special procedures, to enable the in situ investigation of human rights issues in Ecuador.

8. Ecuador believes that promoting international cooperation among countries, both multi- and bilaterally, is an effective strategy to heighten the willingness of States to make progress in the full enjoyment and protection of human rights.

II. Internal progress in the field of human rights

9. The Government of Ecuador has encouraged legislative amendments that enable domestic law to be brought into line with all the international human rights treaties to which it is a party.

10. The Government of Ecuador, complying with its duty to guarantee human rights, is in the process of adopting several bills, such as the Act on the System to Promote and Protect Human Rights; the Organization Act on Preferential Border Treatment; the Organization Act on Priority Protection of the Rights of Older Persons; the Act to Amend the Organization Act on Disabilities; the Act to Promote Youth Employment; the Act to Amend the Code for Children and Adolescents; the Organization Act on the Office of the Ombudsperson; the Organization Act on Human Mobility; and the Organization Act on the Prevention, Control and Punishment of Harassment, Intimidation or Violence in Ecuadorian Schools.

11. In the area of international humanitarian law, the National Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law monitors and contributes to the effective implementation of the obligations of the State.

12. The Government of Ecuador has implemented a new police doctrine, based on the principles of order, security and the protection of rights, with an institutional approach that is humanistic and oriented towards service to the community.

13. The Government of Ecuador has implemented national human rights plans and agendas, including the following:

(a) National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, Smuggling of Migrants, Sexual and Labour Exploitation and Other Forms of Exploitation, Child Pornography and the Corruption of Minors;

(b) National Plan for the Eradication of Gender-Based Violence, which is based on a comprehensive legislative framework that guarantees women and girls the right to live a life free of violence;

(c) Plurinational Plan to Eliminate Racial Discrimination and Ethnic and Cultural Exclusion;

(d) Five national equality agendas that address gender, interculturality, human mobility, disability and intergenerational issues (2013-2017).

14. The Government of Ecuador is working to establish five National Equality Councils in the areas of (1) peoples and ethnicities; (2) gender; (3) intergenerational issues; (4) disabilities; and (5) human mobility, in accordance with the provisions of the Organization Act on National Equality Councils. Representatives of State sectors and civil society serve on these Councils, on an equal footing, and their goal is to ensure the full enjoyment and exercise of the rights enshrined in the Constitution and international human rights instruments and to participate in the formulation, observance, monitoring and assessment of inclusive public policies.

15. The Government of Ecuador has made significant progress in providing access to information on international human rights obligations through the Human Rights Information System (Sistema de Información sobre Derechos Humanos, SIDERECHOS), which is an on-line web tool that aggregates information on constitutional and international human rights standards, and has a drafting and

publishing module for the reports submitted by the State to the Human Rights Council and the various committees.

III. Voluntary commitments of Ecuador for its mandate

16. To strengthen the Human Rights Council as an independent and non-selective human rights body, responsible for assessing human rights compliance, objectively and transparently.

17. To acknowledge the universal periodic review as the sole mechanism for compliance and for the assessment of the status of human rights throughout the world.

18. To reaffirm the commitment of Ecuador to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the regional offices in investigations, dissemination, the exchange of best practices, and responses to complaints made to the corresponding mechanisms and special procedures of alleged human rights violations.

19. To encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify international human rights instruments or to consider doing so, in order to meet one of the main goals in the field of human rights: their universalization.

20. Where applicable, to propose or support the adoption of new international instruments to protect human rights and to promote consultations with affected persons as a way to encourage States' participation in such processes.

21. To continue to offer an alternative approach to the current development model, in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, by promoting inclusive socioeconomic growth in harmony with nature, with a rights-based approach and with concrete and measurable steps that include the identification and joint provision of the corresponding means of implementation.

22. To consolidate the work of the National Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law of Ecuador through the adoption of the 2016 Plan of Action, which highlights the steps taken at the national level by the Government to promote international humanitarian law and to train public servants in this field.

23. To consolidate the reform of the social rehabilitation system and to implement the prison management model comprehensively.

24. To continue with the inclusive policy of democratization of access to primary, secondary and higher education for prisoners in order for them to continue their studies while serving their sentences, so as to ensure true rehabilitation and social reintegration.

25. To strengthen human rights knowledge management in the curricula of the public sector institutions that have training schools, such as the prison training school, the judiciary school, the police school and military and armed forces schools.

26. To strengthen human rights training and continuous education for public servants.

27. To institutionalize training modules in specific human rights themes, designed to meet the international obligations of the Government of Ecuador.

28. To consolidate the establishment and institutionalization of the five National Equality Councils.

29. Within the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent, to continue the implementation by the Government of Ecuador of the National Agenda for the Equality of Ethnicities and Peoples, with an emphasis on the following elements: (i) lands and territories; (ii) collective rights; (iii) administration and access to justice; (iv) rights to live well (*Buen Vivir*); (v) economic rights; (vi) communication, information and participation; (vii) plurinationality and interculturality.

30. To reduce and prevent hazardous child labour, through an interlinked set of policies, programmes and activities aimed towards addressing causes and effects, from a perspective of shared social responsibility and restitution of rights to boys, girls and youth.

31. To support active citizenship of the older population and positive ageing, and the promotion of the rights of older persons.

32. To continue with the progressive implementation of the National Plan for the Eradication of Gender-Based Violence to guarantee the right of women, girls and adolescents to live a life free of all forms of violence.

33. To promote the establishment of a network of national mechanisms for gender equality, in cooperation with other countries, that will encourage the exchange of regional experiences and best practices.

34. To strengthen the Judiciary School with basic, continuing and specialized training programmes, aimed at members of the judiciary, to provide them with technical tools and specific knowledge geared towards protecting the right to effective and impartial justice and judicial guarantees.

35. To continue with high-level dialogue to establish a comprehensive public policy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex groups, addressing the fight against discrimination, access to justice, inclusive workplaces, access to health and access to education.

36. To continue with the inclusive policy and programmes implemented by the Government related to the rights of persons with disabilities.

37. To provide technical assistance to countries in the region, in the framework of South-South cooperation, in the field of inclusive disability management, replicating successful models developed by Ecuador in this field.

38. To train civilian and military members of the armed forces in the "Mariscal Antonio José de Sucre" specialized course in international humanitarian law.

39. To promote the participation of citizens through dialogue, as the best way to solve conflicts and achieve social peace.